

Community View – A Tale of Two Towns – One Divided

Does the Journal News ever confirm the identity of 'Community View' authors? Recently, I pondered this question after reading the community view article titled, "A Village for Monsey Area as Well." The underlying circumstances for each of the situations posed in the article were concealed (maybe for brevity or perhaps another more self-serving reason) and when taken out of their true context, resulted in a total distortion of the truth. How convenient and beneficial to Supervisor Chris St. Lawrence. One has to wonder if the individual who wrote the 'view' ever attend and LISTENED to ALL of the arguments that have been presented in Ramapo Town Hall on the Ladentown Incorporation, and the recently adopted Comprehensive Master Plan.

It appears that the true intent of the article is to launch a 'political barb' at another public official, that being Haverstraw Supervisor Howard Phillips, who found the petition to incorporate the Village of Ladentown legally sufficient under NYS Village Law. It would seem that when the Journal News calls an 'Ace an Ace' and a 'Spade a Spade', individuals within a particularly sensitive voting bloc, or town board, scream for no other reason than to hear themselves speak. Once again, how self-serving and detrimental to the remaining communities.

The destruction that has occurred, and that continues to occur within the Town of Ramapo is abhorrent. Recently, the Journal News published an article about the recent destruction that has occurred on the the Patrick Farm in Ramapo. The owners/developers have been charged by the NYS DEC for damaging protected wetlands. Their excuse... "Didn't know permit was required." Of course one could argue, "Is permit required to ever destroy 'Protected Wetlands.' Finally, the true intentions of the owners/developers – that being the destruction of the entire Patrick Farm – are been brought to light for the entire region, state, and federal government to see. It's about time that these individuals are brought to justice and told that the destruction of protected wetlands is a crime, punishable under the law. Hopefully, justice will be served. However, it is a shame that the Ramapo Town board was not also charged. Their actions regarding the Comprehensive Master Plan AND more importantly, their negligence regarding enforcement of their our LAWS on Code enforcement Ramapo Town have lead to the overdevelopment in Ramapo. Ramapo's answer to all the illegal zoning, let's develop a master plan and make all the illegal zoning legal. Instead of enforcing existing laws and punish individuals who break the laws, the town sought the easy way out, to the detriment of those of us in the region. And it appears that Ramapo Town officials are doing this in order to cater to a particular 'bloc vote'.

Perhaps most disturbing to the 'majority' of residents in this area is the following. The same individuals who have not abided by the 'zoning' and development laws are the first to articulate that their 'rights are being violated'. It appears that the citizens/residents of this area are caught up in this 'Catch 22'. How convenient for the 'voting bloc.' And the politicians who are suppose to listen to all sides and uphold the law are only listening to those who 'provide a vote' and are negligent in their duties at upholding town laws. And yet, rather than enforce existing laws, the town adopts another almost unenforceable law regarding Adult Student Housing. Question, if the town can't uphold their existing laws, then why are they creating new ones. Of yes, to appease the 'bloc vote.'

I also have pondered whether the article's author ever attended and listened attentively to ALL of the arguments that were presented and entered in the record in Ramapo Town Hall regarding the subjects of the Master Plan and Village of Ladentown incorporation? Or whether the author has



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read about numerous articles regarding deregulation of the Energy industry. Had this been done, then the author would have become 'well-informed' and self-education on these subject matters, like the majority of residents from this area who have attended these meetings, and it would plainly appear that following occurred:



it would be plainly apparent that arguments presented were falsehoods. Example, petitions to incorporate other areas within the Town of Ramapo were found legally sufficient because, for once instance, the boundaries of the proposed villages overlapped, in direct violation of the criteria to incorporate under NYS Village Law. In addition, had the author investigated listened to the arguments in town hall, and investigated further, he should have determined that the 'petition to create the Orchard Ridge was essential a ploy by a most favored developer in the town of Ramapo to mire the issues and create circumstances that would most definitely result in the petition to incorporate these villages being denied.

As an example, St. Lawrence was recently quoted in the Journal News as stating, "I swore an oath to uphold the US constitution and the laws of NYS." He used this argument to deny the basic rights of residents from the Ladentown area their CONSTITUTIONAL right to vote. His argument stated that the petition did not meet legally sufficiency under NYS Village Law. rights of the residents of the 'Ladentown' area to pervert the law has occurred in Ramapo during the past two years regarding the public hearings about the previous subjects previousand Unlike the author, the majority of readers are well-informed and realized that as a result of deregulation, there has been a cascading affect regarding property valuations for utility companies. Unfortunately, because there are several in the Town of Haverstraw, the town has taken a proactive position to prepare for reevaluations of these properties. While un

has had to prepare From the article, it appears that the author is trying to mire the issues by suggestion that taxes are increasing the issues, The word itself can conjure up many feelings and thoughts. For some individuals, the opinions and views we form are based upon what we read about our elected officials in the newspaper. We don't always immediately feel the impact of their decisions, but eventually we do. For others, the opinions we formulate are not only based upon what we read, but by what we experience first hand in the town and village board meetings. In some instances, the actions taken by our democratically elected officials are felt immediately. As

In theory, a politician should be a leader. An individual who is able to take charge and steer the community toward a greater public good. Sometimes the road to do such is rough. However, a politician has many support mechanisms. One of which is the law. In the end, however, it should be the politicians responsibility to unite a community/region andnot divide it.

Recently, the actions of Supervisor Christopher St. Lawrence have same a is suppose to be a leader; one who is able to bring people together in order to come to a rational and educated decision. Sometimes, with the help of the town board, town laws, and community input. And sometimes based upon the general In theory, a leader is suppose to embody several remarkable traits. One of this skills is suppose to be to bring individuals and groups together, to handle leader is suppose to a person who brings p

Over the past 2 years I have attended numerous town board meetings and village meetings concern the Town of Ramapo's Comprehensive Master Plan. And from first hand experience I can tell you that there are not enough words to capture

views and our opinions are created from our voyeuristic relation we have of them... that being reading about them in the newspaper. For others, who have attended we have of politicians are voyeuristic as we read about them in the paper. For myself and those in my community, I believe they are meaningful, realistic, For myself and those in my community, I believe our views of politicians is what we for some of us fortunate individuals, like myself and those in the Village of Pomona, our politicians are individuals whose true desires are for community service and the betterment of the community in which we live.

our politicians are those individuals who seek to volunteer and do a public service. Politicians are also suppose to be the leaders of the community, and as such, one of the responsibilities is to bring people together to discuss the issues, come to an educated and informed decision. Not drive your neighbors apart. Unfortunately, they are elected to represent the interests of their constituents as defined in part under the law. However, there are individuals who pervert the law...and it appears that one such individual is the current supervisor of the Town of Ramapo – Christopher St. Lawrence.

Yes, Ramapo is extremely diverse. And yet, it is also a town divided and one that has and appears to continue to allow divisions and segregation to occur which under the guise of public service.

While the Town of Ramapo is extremely diverse, it is also a town divided with

, which professes to be one of the most diverse towns in the state, proport to represent all the people. But lately, in Ramapo, thPerhaps this is one of the most unsettling feelingTo borrow a phrase..."it was the best of times, it was the worst of times.' For those who have consistently garnered the favoritism of Ramapo's town government decision...it continues to be the 'best of times.' For those of us residents that live in the area most affected by Ramapo's recent debacle and decisions, the times (and our community) is changing and not for the better.

The people who live in the immediate area surround the Patrick Farm property are living the unimaginable. What has been a rural existence for several hundreds years is about to be turned into

Validity of the petitions....exceed the criteria established under the law.
The majority ha the ability to choose their destiny...

Taxes in Pomona significantly may be 50% less...
What does Mirant have to do with Petition on Ladentown??
6 million surplus.

55+ community... world class spa 50 acres as parkland and recreation. 4 units per acre controlled growth working with working
31 mill from haverstraw for doing
37 million...

It would be interesting

Personal attack on Mr. Phillips...are you the author of the letter. Stay focused on petition.

Who goes out and hires a handwriting expert. Instead of staff calling and verifying petition.. less cost than consultant. Handwriting expertise recommended by Yachovia. Circumventing public will by avoiding to include this democratic process. Going through Master Plan could go through...Usurp by passing local

Only objections 10 names....Aze cotag and Zeiler professional survey regarding village boundaries. Shame to avoid democracy from tacking place for people....

Ryan Karben has been diversity... maybe Chris St. Lawrence should be the poster child on what not to do to divide a town. should invite post child

Obvious...

Chris St. Lawrence could be the post child on what not to do to divide a town. His actions/inactions could potentially be a case study for years to come.

by Brett Yagel

(Resident -- Village of Pomona, Town of Haverstraw)

indirectly allowed the destruction of area which brings to the forefront what we've known all along. The owners/developers of the Patrick Farm recognize no laws/government until the time they may feel their rights are being violated. Then then welcome the free and guarantee representation. Recently, the DEC bring charges against the owners of the Patrick Farm property. Finally, maybe the true laws of the landing will be enforced and see the light of day in Ramapo.

As a citizen of the region, I as well as many of the area's current residents are continually amazed that a government that is suppose to be '...Of the People, By the People, and For the People.' has become one that is 'of the developer, by the developer, and for [only] the developer.'

Christopher St. Lawrence was recently quotes in the Journal News as "...I was elected to uphold the laws of the state of New York and the US Constitution, and that is what I'm doing." More importantly, Mr. St. Lawrence you were elected to an office and were charged with upholds the laws of the Town of Ramapo. It seems you Another perversion of the truth. And perhaps most importantly, what is missing from his statement

[perhaps intentionally] is that he and Ramapo government have failed consistently to enforce their own laws regarding zoning. Perhaps if more emphasis were placed on enforcing code regulations, the town could save potentially millions code enforcement violations,

And has ignored the voices of the people to which it is suppose to represent. There have been many injustices related to this property of the last several years and maybe finally some justice will be served. Ramapo, I believe, is practicing a form of selective discrimination and favoritism. Ramapo historically and even most recently, failed at enforcing zoning requirements. When owners/developers in Ramapo fail to obey the law, Ramapo rewarded them. On 4/9/04, Ramapo filed a complaint to the NYS DEC re: owners/developers damaging the Patrick Farm Property (protected wetlands of US Government and NYS). The town's response (award), less than 3 weeks after the town filed a complaint; the town submitted a proposal to amend the local zoning laws to Rockland County. Why? Why is it when the citizens/people located in the villages of Kaiser, New Square, Chestnut Ridge, Montebello, Pomona, etc. wanted to form villages, this was put to a vote and the villages were allowed to be formed. And yet, when the same criteria is applied to the recent petition to form the Village of Ladentown, the petition is found deficient and all of the deficient are submitted by the owner/developer of the property. One has to wonder if the proverbial shoe was on the other foot, and the petitioners had found the deficiencies, if the supervisor would have again not listened and found the petition 'sufficient', just based upon the groups involved. What St. Lawrence did was to totally depriving the MAJORITY of people who live here their constitutional right to vote? Did the Kaiser and New Square villages' boundaries measure to the 'tents

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I hope that Justice will be served. And I only hope that justice continues to remain blindfolded and isn't swayed by favoritism or public opinion. If based on the facts alone, swift and severe and that the owners/developers of the Patrick Farm property will be Maybe now, justice will be served to the owner/developers of the Patrick Farm property. My only regret is that St. Lawrence and his town boards weren't charged as well. It is because of their actions (and favoritism) that this owner/developer may believe that destruction of the land was permitted. the land that is protected by both federal and state laws. Once again, it proves that Ramapo's actions are detrimental to the . Ramapo's favoritism practices are not only detrimental to the residents of the region, but to our natural resources as well.

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Thank You

Brett Yagel

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A village for Monsey area as well?

RON SMITH

(Original publication: September 20, 2004)

(The writer lives in Suffern.)

I was shocked to see you attack Ramapo Supervisor Christopher St. Lawrence in your recent editorial. Your headline was, "People's right thwarted."

Yes, the newspaper that claims to bring us balanced views is taking a stand on this important matter of the proposed Ladentown incorporation. You have chosen to be the judge between two supervisors and have declared Haverstraw Supervisor Howard Phillips the honorable man. You wrote, "Ramapo's Christopher St. Lawrence nitpicked his way toward improper justification of illegalities in the petition."

I wonder where the venerable Journal News was at the time of the nitpicking that was done to stop the Village of Monsey many years ago. Guess what, the courts found that seven names in error invalidated that village petition. Then lately we had the petition for Highview Heights, which was proposed by some Orthodox Jewish residents to allow residents of the area to create the higher density that they felt was needed for their growth.

The supervisor found some errors, and we did not see the headlines in your paper that the will of the people was thwarted. Yet again, his decision was upheld by the courts. Let us not forget the petition for Forshay Hills; no position was taken by your paper on that village that was formed by primarily orthodox Jewish people to set their own course.

Suddenly, when we have a new village forming to stop the migration of the Hasidic and Orthodox Jewish population to the other side of town, your paper has decided to degrade and demean the supervisor for using the same evenhanded approach that was used when reviewing all the other petitions that were denied.

The decision to create Ladentown was made long before the town created the Student Housing Law. Members of the local population who are activists on behalf of the Village of Ladentown have openly said that they do not want Hasidics moving in to the neighborhood. Now they are using the Housing Law (that most likely will never be relevant to the property at Patrick farm if they allow the developer to get on with developing his land under the large, full-acre zoning that was proposed by the master plan) as a new pretext for concern.

Phillips, who is under pressure for his disastrous tax hike and potential decimation of his town finances for many years if he loses his case with Mirant, has played pure politics. Any review of court cases regarding village formation law will support St. Lawrence and his decision. I am afraid that your choice for Phillips as a "decent town justice," based upon his review of the incorporation petition, is that you are of the opinion that justice must truly be blind.

As for the Student Housing Law, I agree that it is flawed, as its true stated purpose is to regulate development on religious entities and schools by creating a maximum density and controlled use. This is most likely invalid pursuant to state and federal laws, and the town attorney's office should know better. Religious use cannot be regulated and must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Your statement, "orderly growth of suburbia" must also be a case of selective amnesia; you forget that your paper editorialized on May 1, 2003, "Ramapo attempts to erase decades of political neglect." There you wrote, "The only certainty related to Ramapo's new master plan is that no matter what final form the document takes, there will be a lot of unhappy people. That's usually the outcome, even under the best of circumstances. Given that this revision is trying to undo 40 years of planning neglect, that outcome was inevitable."

You are definitely correct that normal circumstances would allow a slower pace of change, but correcting a 40-year problem needs strong and swift action.

You finish off your opinion by saying, "The future of Ramapo is at stake here." I wish you would clarify that statement and explain what this is supposed to mean to your readers. Are you saying that by allowing one-acre zoning at Patrick farm, we will somehow lose our future? Or do you mean that if we allow the Orthodox to expand, then it will change the feeling and character of our community?

In any event, I think based upon your reasoning for Ladentown, we should allow the Monsey area residents to incorporate as a village and decide their own destiny. This would allow for true planned development, as they wish, by zoning for large, tall residential buildings with plenty of open space for gardens, parks, religious schools and activities.

After all, we cannot allow the will of the residents to be thwarted. This would further relieve the pressure on the young families who otherwise may wish to emigrate to the surrounding villages, and thus leave those villages Hasidic-free.